TIPS FOR NEW TEACHERS

Compiled by Julie Probst Wheeler, Utah State University

ADMINISTRATION

Talk to the administration about what kind of help and support they give to the teachers during the first year and what type of training they do to help you with the money matters at their school. —Christine Holt

ASSIGNMENTS/EVALUATIONS

As you give assignments...keep in mind what the end goal is for students. If the assignment does not apply to the end goal, it may not be important. –Marie Barber

A balance of learning/teaching activities is important. The teacher does not have to 'tell students' everything they need to know. We have great textbooks to help so teachers do not have to create or find information on line, etc. Sometimes we get so busy creating activities that we forget to have a life. –Marie Barber

- 1. Before you give out an assignment, have the grading sheet and points possible ready.
- 2. Break down the percent each area of your class is worth. EX: Tests 25%, Labs 30%, Participation 20% etc.
- 3. Thoroughly explain all assignments when given out, and the grading procedure.
- 4. I would like to go more in depth than breadth with my units. I felt like I skimmed over the top of everything and still didn't have time to cover it all.
- 5. I will do more quizzes to see that students are getting the concepts.
- 6. Set limits on turning things in late, and limit make up labs, etc.
- 7. Gather study questions for state skills from other teachers at the beginning of the year, not at the end. Use them as bell ringers and/or quizzes to help prepare students. –Karen Kramer

ATTENDANCE

I have a tardy log at my front door on a clipboard, so I can keep track of who comes in tardy. It also has a place for the reason for the tardy, which I can share with a parent if I need to phone home. —Jeannie Brown

CHEATING

Something that I would have like covered a little more in my college class was how to deal with students that cheat and then lie when confronted about it. I don't know if other first year teachers have had this thought, but that's one thing I've had to deal with this year.

--Kimberly Hermansen

CLASSROOM POLICIES

- 1. Starting work when the bell rings will go a long way in taking care of behavior problems. Let them know you mean business from the very first minute. I always have an on-time quiz or a response statement that they need to complete on their participation card if they are on time. They pick up their card every day when they come into class I pick up the cards that are left because I know those students are either absent or tardy. Participation cards are also a great back up for attendance rolls. I also keep track of their hall passes on it. I give them 20 participation points a day. They lose 10 for a tardy and all 20 for an unexcused absence. They can also lose points for bad behavior, not participating etc. –Vivien Brown
- 2. Don't be afraid to say no, no again, no I'm sorry, I understand, but no especially in junior high. –Mary Jane Mcguire

- 3. Before the school year starts decide what your policies are going to be (on grades and make up work etc.) and have a talk with the principal to make sure he/she agrees and will back you up when parents complain. Make sure you understand policies that your school/district has about parent notification for failing grades and failing citizenship grades. My district had a policy I did not know about that said every parents must be notified before a failing grade is given. I did not know and so did not notify the parents consequently I had to change every grade that was failing in all of my classes. —Heather Lorimer
- 4. I spend the first few days with a power point with handout about my classroom rules and procedures. We also spend time playing some team building games. I think it has helped cut down on misbehavior. —Jeannie Brown
- 5. The greatest piece of advice I can give a new teacher is to set the limits and then be consistent when enforcing them. Make the consequence match the infraction. I do not believe that a teacher needs a lot of rules but the rules need to allow the teacher to teach and the student the opportunity to learn. My rules and responsibilities are few. --Marlene John-Irons

FINANCES

- 1. I was so confused with money management when I first started. I know that is something that is different at each school new teachers should have a basic idea of their finances before starting school. –Christine Holt
- 2. Let the teachers know that there is a little thing called teacher dues and professional dues that you have to pay. They might want to ask how much the teacher dues are and plan it in to their budget when the time comes to pay them. –Kala Lohrenz

GRADING

Keep up on your grades. Every week make sure you are totally caught up. -Heather Lorimer

- 1. You do not have to correct every answer on every assignment. Sometimes it is ok to give credit for completion and sometimes it is okay just to correct a few answers. —Heather Lorimer
- 2. You don't have to grade every single assignment given...some can be participation points only or no points at all. –Camille Haskan

FOODS CLASS

- Do not demonstrate and fill out lab sheets the same day of your lab- do it the day before so they can have time to clean up, and time for the students to think about what they are going to be learning.
- Having students write down the recipe assures that they have read the recipe.
- Clearly state expectations- have a rotating chart of who cleans the demo unit, fills soap, checks for clean garbage cans, does the laundry for the day's lab
- Using fingernail polish to mark each unit in a different color assures the items get put back where they belong. –Joy Poulson
- 1. One thing I found helpful in teaching foods is to have all the recipes a head of time and do one large shopping trip before school so there is not so much grocery shopping every month. I also tried to get recipes that had a lot of staples and not special ingredients just for that recipe. —Amy Johnson
- 2. When you do a foods lab it is fine to have all the labs make the same thing instead of having each lab do something different and share with everyone. I spent so much time preparing so many things because I wanted them to learn everything in the WORLD, NOW! --Teresa Griffin

HALL PASSES

I allow my students one "free" hall pass per term. Beyond that one, each hall past costs 15 points. They earn 25 pts a day for being on time, prepared, obeying class rules etc so the 15 pts comes from that 25 pts if they use more than their one free hall pass. At the end of the term, I give 15 extra credit points for never using a hall pass. I have a column in my records where I record the number of times a student uses a hall pass, then at the end of the term I deduct that number X's 15 and deduct it from their daily points. Then I record the 15 bonus points, where that applies. To keep track, I just have students write their name on a sticky note in exchange for the hall pass, then I record the sticky notes whenever I get a minute. It's amazing! Very few students ever use a hall pass. – Rosemary Lindberg

LESSON PLANS

- 1. Use others ideas and don't try to recreate a unit the first year. Just stay a float on someone else's work. The list serve is great for this. –Amy Johnson
- 2. Learn how to prepare a lesson in 5 minutes. The kind of lesson plans that college prepares you to write work great for the teacher who has only 1 or 2 preps, but when you have 5 preps as many FACS positions do, you can't write lesson plans with that much detail. But that process you learn in college is good, I just think that people need to have practice thinking on the fly so that they can be prepared for what a teacher's life is really like. —Ruth Merrill
- 3. Don't be afraid of a scope and sequence. Make an initial plan, then change as needed. Be sure to record the changes. Fill in details as you go along, but know where you are supposed to be to cover everything. I still use one faithfully-it's sort of my lesson plan now. —Pamela Rock/Laycee Johnson
- 4. Go visit other schools and teachers who teach what you teach. If you collect a bunch of ideas to begin with, you can evaluate and use what you like as you go. My first year I tried to do it all myself and now I look back after 20 year I really think that was dumb of me. —Pat Jorgenson
- 5. Take a minute after every lesson plan to evaluate what you can do better next time. Be organized and keep all of your lesson plans, handouts, visual aids, together in file folders. Keep up on grades each week. Don't be hard on yourself. It is a learning experience and you get better every year you teach. Have joy in the journey. —Steph Nelson
- 6. Focus on organizing lesson plans, and ideas and things that have been taught. Set up a system from the very start, so you will know where things are. I see so many emails from teachers about losing things and I know we have so much to keep in order I lose things all the time. I think teaching some organizational tidbits would be wonderful. I took a class at summer conference not long after I started teaching and we were taught to put our lesson plans in a binder with copies of the handouts etc., this has saved my life. I am so glad I was taught to do that. Hope this is helpful. --Carol Anne Rockwell
- 7. I would remind them that they do not need outstanding lesson plan for each class each day. When you have as many preparations as we can have in a day you can feel overwhelmed in a hurry. Remind them that they can develop them as they go along. Within a few years all of their lessons plans can be outstanding. I would try to have each class have two to three really good lesson plans each week. Also write down what worked or did not work as you go along. Write down things you would do different next time as well. You think you will not forget but often times you do. I also wrote down if the lesson plan was too long or didn't take as much time as you planned on.....that is valuable information for the next time. Also remember each class is different and what works for one classes may not work for another class, you often need to change as you go. –Lanay Page
- 8. Organize your units into binders: include one copy of every worksheet, power point, lesson plan etc. Include a CD with all your electronic lessons too. This will make it easy for a sub and for you. —Camille Haskan

MANAGEMENT

- 1. Try to be at least 3 days or more ahead of yourself....copies made, food bought, etc. -Mary Jane Mcguire
- 2. Take digital photos to learn names. -Mary Jane Mcguire
- 3. Never do anything for your students they should do for themselves- laundry, dishes, cleaning, etc. It is a very important part of being independent. –Joy Poulson
- 4. Putting my objectives on the board each day and going over them with my students before I start teaching. -Taunya Brooks
- 5. Posting review statements that cover information I will be teaching each day...students copy them while I take roll, and then I review them before class and at the end of class. This really improves retention and test scores. –Taunya Brooks
- 6. I have a labeled file crate for each class in the classroom and each student has their own file in order to receive graded papers. This saves an unbelievable amount of time not passing back papers. —Chris Hill
- 7. I learned to have them do something fun or to watch a movies the class day after a test so then if you had people absent for the test, you can pull them out of class to take it and they wouldn't miss anything! I also give them a progress report that day and then during the movie if they have questions about their grade, (which they always do) you can take care of it right in class. -Mindy Johnson
- 8. Have students do a lot of work in classroom management, cleaning, papers, etc. -Amy Johnson
- 9. White boards and markers can be purchased at Home Depot and cut in 12 inch squares- use them for quick review and you know immediately who knows what. I used a yard of fleece cut into pieces for the wipes. I am still using them four years later. They wash up nicely. –Joy Poulson
- 10. Only touch paper once ~ in the mail room sort through and only keep the essential stuff, dump the rest, with assignments grade them and input in the computer ASAP then return to students. Don't let them sit around. File away extra worksheets, assignments etc. as soon as you are finished...don't wait to do it later. —Camille Haskan

MOTIVATION

- My greatest discovered idea is to be standing at the door in between classes to greet every student who walks through my
 classroom door. I always have something to hand out that pertains to the day's lesson. It intrigues and excites them to be
 in class. It saves me time during class from handing things out or dividing students into groups (already did it at the door). I
 have also noticed that it nearly removes my tardy problems and my students appear anxious to get to class to see what I
 am handing out. –Stacy Johnson
- 2. Make sure you have Starters or Bell-ringers for every class every day. It really does work. -Heather Lorimer
- 3. Bell ringers are great, but collect them weekly, or students will lose them and you will feel bad because they deserve the points, etc. It's a challenge to find a system that works for you. –Karen Kramer
- 4. Compliment students. Focus and reward positive behaviors/performance. Ignore or give little attention to negative behaviors. Like the child, not necessarily their choices and behaviors. Make parents your allies for their student's success. —Shelly Moser

PERSONAL TIPS

Don't be afraid to admit you're human, we all make mistakes. If you make a mistake admit it quickly, and laugh with yourself,
if possible. –Shelly Moser

- 2. Don't get caught up in comparing yourself to the amazing teacher who has been at your school for 20 years. It is your first year not your 20th. —Heather Lorimer
- 3. Don't let the class from Hell ruin your year. You will have one and at the end of the semester they will go away. You can make it. —Heather Lorimer
- 4. Most importantly let the kids know that you care about their success in your class. -Marlene John-Irons
- 5. My clip of advice is.... Don't feel like you have to have every lesson, worksheet, lab, project PERFECT the first year. As hard as you will try, you will end up needing to fix or change it eventually, so just do your very best and use your next 2, 5, 10 etc. years to get it PERFECT! I almost drove myself into an ulcer-driven nervous breakdown because during my first year I let my perfectionism get the best of me. Since then, I've learned:) --Heather Whitworth
- 6. Have fun with your students. It is ok to do that unit or project that is lots of fun, just make sure they are learning something.

 -Heather Lorimer
- 7. Remember these students are still kids...they are learning how to learn and be responsible. (even some adults have not accomplished this) –Marie Barber
- 8. I am a second year teacher and I have learned students really do rise to your level of praise....find something to praise them for. Make them want to be who you want them to be. —Diane Wilson
- 9. Have fun and don't stress too much!! -- Camille Haskan
- 10. Have students write their name on a popsicle stick. When you need class participation, draw a stick from the box. It helps you get to know the students and makes sure everyone is participating. —Julie Wheeler

PROFESSIONALISM

Get involved outside of the classroom!!! My greatest rewards professionally have come because I was willing to risk...try on a little fear, and jump right in to FCCLA. My experiences there gave me an opportunity to work with my high school student government, and now on to the State FCCLA advisor. Such great experience! :) Candace Thurgood

Don't get caught up in difficult office politics. They are bound to happen, but do your best to keep a professional attitude at work. Act, don't react.—Alcia Lambert

RESOURCES

I wish I had learned about resources sooner—Simplicity patterns for \$1.00 or McCalls/Butterrick for \$.95 cents. Haan's Craft- great to order projects from. Nasco is great to order from. Jo Ann's Fabric has teacher discounts, Ag In The Classroom, etc. I love these resources—would have been easier to get supplies if I knew where to look! --Kristi Johnson

Materials available through the State Office Web-site are invaluable. Don't forget to use them. -Ellen Hill

Teach kids to conserve. Everything does not have to be thrown away. We are "consumer science professionals"- not wasters. –Joy Poulson

Laminate all your visual aids (or use plastic sheet covers). It will save your hours of re-doing the same thing over and over. —Julie Wheeler